

Build Your Immunity to Criticism



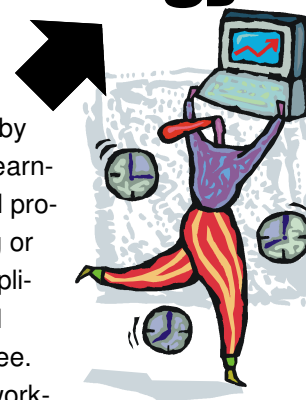
Although eagerly welcoming constructive feedback, employees who accomplish a lot on the job know their successes will sometimes rub others the wrong way. Not everyone will be quick to praise your triumphs when you are cast into the limelight by others who recognize your achievements. Learning to detach from unhelpful criticism is a skill to help you stay motivated, adapt to change, and think more creatively about your job. Try these “inoculators” to beef up your immunity: 1) Remember, those who criticize may not know the real you. 2) See negative criticism as possible validation you are “on the right track.” 3) Accept criticism as normal and part of life’s challenges. 4) Search for any truth in the criticism. Something about it may be helpful despite the style of its delivery. 5) Let criticism inspire you to work with even more vigor toward accomplishing your dreams, rather than forcing you into retreat.

Pay Attention to Accolades



Pay attention to moments of super satisfaction in your work expressed by customers, co-workers or supervisors. Ask yourself: What skills, abilities, or personality traits did I exhibit to earn this praise? These unique characteristics make you outstanding as a worker. Tuck these gems away so you don’t forget them. Use these descriptions of yourself in resumes and cover letters in the future. In job interviews, you’ll sell yourself with believability.

Adapt to Technology and Thrive



Do you feel overwhelmed by technological change? Learning to use software-related productivity tools, such as web building or graphics programs, may seem complicated, but mastering these tools will make you a more desirable employee. Dependence on technology in the workplace is increasing. Remaining in denial or resisting change rather than facing diminishing ability to keep up with technology changes will increase workplace stress. Determine to get started. You may never be an expert, but as you learn more each day, your technological confidence will grow.

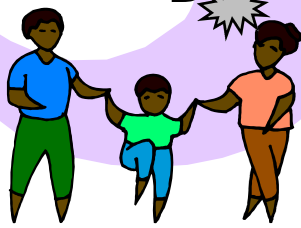
Help Prevent Internet Harassment



Internet harassment or cyber-stalking is rapidly gaining attention as a serious crime in many states. Cyber-stalking is intentional harassing or threatening another person through the use of electronic communication. Activities may include disturbing text messages; sending unwanted, abusive, threatening, or obscene e-mails; or using Internet postings, message boards, or chat rooms to slander another person. Online harassment is similar to real-world stalking in its ability to disturb and frighten the victim. Perpetrators take advantage of the online environment and its false sense of security to act anonymously and harass another person. If you are a victim of this vicious activity, talking to your EAP may be the first step to getting help.

Affected by a Mentally Ill Family Member

Each year millions of people are diagnosed with mental illness. Family members commonly feel an overwhelming sense of helplessness and anxiety and may secretly blame themselves for the mental illness, believing something they did caused it. Since family members are often the key to successful intervention, helping them cope is crucial to helping those with mental illness. To empower your ability to cope and intervene, do the following: 1) Learn about signs and symptoms of mental illness, including recurrence symptoms so you can act sooner to intervene. 2) Avoid falling into traps of shame and guilt. Reach out for support from professionals or self-help support groups. 3) Don't ignore the needs of children. Let them know they are not to blame for the mental illness, and provide information suitable to their ability to understand. This can help prevent self-blame into the future. 4) Understand the patient's responsibility for managing the illness—a key principle in chronic disease treatment. Work with professionals to appropriately reinforce the patient's management of the illness. Know the laws pertaining to involuntary hospitalization in case you need legal help. 5) Take care of yourself! Being affected by a family member with mental illness will take a toll on your own mental health. Schedule activities that are fun, and make sure you have social support.



2008: Eat Right, Exercise ... Plan for Setbacks

If you're targeting improved personal health and wellness this year, plan ahead for intervention the moment a setback is experienced. Your high motivation to stick with your resolution may not last, and that is normal. But, you can act faster to intervene by not dismissing the setback and allowing it to snowball into inactivity. Plan your intervention now so you can improve your chances of climbing back into the saddle and moving on. Don't rely upon pure willpower to rekindle your motivation. Instead, motivate yourself with fast, massive action by seeking help from companions and friends who share your goals, using audio/visual material or other pre-planned inspirational inputs that motivate and reinforce your commitments. Planning ahead for the "what-ifs" won't sabotage your efforts. Instead it will make you feel more capable and less doubtful about your ability to meet your goal.



Shyness: Overcoming Over-Awareness

Shyness is a lack of confidence or a feeling of discomfort, embarrassment, or fear during social interactions. Shyness may inhibit a person so much that he or she has difficulty attaining professional or personal goals and may feel unhappy much of the time. Shyness may be mild or severe enough to create a social phobia. Research has shown about 50% of Americans report experiencing shyness. (*Psychology Today*; Nov/Dec 1995) Does shyness interfere with your goals, behaviors, and emotions? Are you more likely to agree with unfavorable statements about your performance, while dismissing the positive things people say about you? Make 2008 your year to tackle shyness head-on. Start with a Web site called www.shyness.com. It contains an excellent list of self-help books. Many books, research discoveries, self-help guides, and specialized treatment programs have emerged to treat shyness in recent years. Step forward and claim the help.



Using Office Politics as a Positive Force

Bad experiences regarding office politics lead many employees to believe that politics is always a negative force in the workplace. Office politics can be disruptive but is frequently a positive force. Politics is defined as shrewdness in managing, contriving, or dealing with people. Here are some ways to make that definition work positively for you: 1) Use free time at work to get to know a teammate in order to foster a better working relationship. 2) Examine why you dislike a coworker, and take steps to correct any problems you have with that person so you create an ally rather than a foe. 3) Form healthy alliances with others to succeed with mutual goals. 4) Nurture healthy relationships so you can work in harmony to create positive changes when they are needed.

